

Andrew Jackson to Daniel Smith, November 12, 1806, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO DANIEL SMITH.¹

¹ U. S. senator from Tennessee 1798–1799, 1805–1809.

Hermitage, November 12, 1806

Dear Genl , Impressed with a belief, that there are plans in operation in the west, inimical to our country and government induces me to write you, and whilst I write I would wish you to keep in view, that a mans mind may be perfectly convinced that a thing is so, and still not be in possession of Testimony that would authorise names to be used or expressed. When great and sensible men form plans of operation, with deep design, the[y] always keep out of view their real object, untill it is ripe for execution and unfold it to no one, unless the[y] are certain that the person to whom the[y] unboosom themselves will go all lengths into their measures. Men may hold out ideas of a patriotic nature which might flow from a love of country as the ostensible object, whilst they have in view some designs against that country that the[y] profess to serve, others may hold out ideas of large purchases and settling new countries, when their designs may be by a conspiracy with a foreign foe, to make a stroke at their own government with those that they know love the government. under present circumst[ances] [*mutilated*] Spain the[y] may hold out ideas of an attack on Mexico on the event of a failure of an accomodation with that nation of our differences,² either under the auspices of government, or under circumstances that government would wink at, and add Mexico either to the union, or by an allience, with the

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2 For two letters from Burr to Jackson which may be classed with the kind of appeal Jackson refers to here, see Parton's *Jackson*, I. 313, 315.

government that might be there created add to the growing greatness of america, give liberty and commerce to millions, and thereby snatch that country from the rapacious hands of Bonepart who might be a troublesome neighbour to the united states, when their plans might be, in common concert with Spain to seize on Neworleans, and Louisiana, and attempt to divide the union. That some such plan is on foot, I have no doubt, and from a conversation with an entire stranger who came introduced to me by letter I have no doubt but there is a plan on foot and that plan is to take possession of Neworleans, the expression drop[t] from him incautiously, and as soon as he discovered that I had taken it up, he attempted to take [me in] to explain etc., etc., but from circumstances I was in Possession off, it flashed upon my mind that plans had been named of settling new countries, of Punishing the Dons, and adding Mexico to the united states etc., etc., [that] were only mere coverings to the real designs. Altho the expressions that fell taking them abstractedly from every thing else would not be sufficient to raise alarm, or connectedly amount to absolute proof, still sir the[y] are strong enough to make me believe that a plan is in operation inimical to the united states, that the Marq[u]is de Yrujo , is in the plan (if it does exist,) and that the army of the united states, as is hinted is to cooperate. Let us suppose a case, that a plan for seperating the Union is actually on foot, how is it to be efected. Permit me to bring to your view how it might be jeopardize[d], and taking into view the attachment of the western people collectively to the government, no other plan presents itself to my view, that could furnish hope of success. First a difference exist[s] between our government and Spain, their minister at open war with our executive, a designing man, forms an intrigue with him to regain the purchased Territory. This designing man intrigues with the general of your army, and he is fully into the measure. The Spanish forces under pretext of defending their frontier (where there has been no encroachment) marches a formidable force, within two hundred miles of New orleans, your Governor of New orleans organises the militia [to] help to defend your territory, but your

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general orders him home at the very moment that he is advancing to take possession of a position on the right bank of the Sabine. The two armies are near enough to make arrangements and to form plans of cooperation. at this moment a deed is made from the Ohio and upper Louisiana on New Orleans, which is in a defenceless situation, two thirds of its inhabitants into the plan. The Town falls an easy prey to its assailants and the two armies protect the conquerors, with the aid of Spain shut the Port against the exportation of the west, and hold out allurements to all the western world to Join and they shall enjoy free trade and profitable commerce. Will not the precedent set, in the case of Colo. B3 insure perfect obedience to the general orders, and do you not think the above plan all things ripe would jeopardize the union, and be the most likely to insure success. it may be asked how the things could be carried into effect without coming to the ears of the government, before the men could be assembled and reach New Orleans. The answer, suppose the contra[c]tor

3 Col. Thomas Butler.

for carrying the mail from the city to New Orleans [enters] into the measure with one of your Post masters, the dispatches could be taken out, or a better plan, all things ripe your mail could be stopt, until the plan was carried into effect. I hope I may be mistaken, but I as much believe that such a plan is in operation as I believe there is a god, and if I am not mistaken, there are in the plan many high characters from New York to New Orleans [*mutilated*] [i]f the plan does exist the commander of the army is much injured if he is not to be second in grade, and your own body is not clear of having some members within its walls, that are countenancing, and knowing to the thing—that is to say They are concerned in the plan of purchases and settlements which I believe is only a cover to the true object as expressed to me by the person alluded to, who attempted to [*mutilated*] for the expressions. I must state I have no proof that would criminate any person in having designs against the government, but from what I do know of certain things my mind is convinced, that such things do exist and I am impressed with a full belief, that the approach of the Spanish troops is to aid in the project, and you may say to the president,

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that I am impressed with a firm belief, that the[y] have no time to loose, that the[y] ought to keep out a good watch over their general, be carefull that their mail is not stopd, (this will be the plan to insure secrecy) and give orders for the defence of Neworleans. I have written to the governor to be on the alert, be silent, and their plans may be discovered. you will see the necessity of keeping this thing from all but the Executive. his wisdom will point out the best measures for the safety of the west, that can be adopted, he will find, that I have kept pace with my jealousies. I have kept the militia in expectation of a call. he has my letter by last post—unless interrupted.

I endeavoured to see Doctor Dixson this morning before he started, when I got to Captain Wards being detained in Nashville last night, he was gone. from some circumstances that was brought to my view today, I determined to send a servant after him with this letter, fearfull that it might not go safe by the mail. The servant and myself started, but finding that he intended [to reach] the caeney Fork tonight, and I knew my servant could not over take him, I therefore intrust it to the mail and wish it safe to hand—and let me impress strongly on your mind, that altho I am not in possession of positive proof, still my mind, is as clearly convinced of the fact as tho I had. your own suspicions will immediately bring to your view, the person I suspect to be at the head. I leave to your Judgt. and Doctor Dixsons how far it would be prudent to let my name as your informant be known to any person unless to the President, or those in his compleat confidence—for you are to understand, that you may even in the departments, (*I do not mean the heads*) not be entirely in safety. This I only name as a caution for only a slight shade of suspicion rest there. I wish you to write me on the receipt of this, and by every mail I will write you by which you may Judge whether, any interference is in the mail untill christmas. I inclose, to Doctor Dixson, Judge Lewis letter, that you may see the situation of that country.

Health and respect,